

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES: The Design Charrette

Neighborhood and community stakeholders came together in April 2004 to share their visions of a revitalized downtown and create achievable strategies towards this goal. Participants took hold of the opportunity to define their vision for the future and focused on the Hancock Lot and adjacent parcels to test their ideas.



Quincy residents work together to identify challenges and strategies to revitalize Quincy Center.

The Charrette



Participants gather to explain each group's model and discuss the issues and the opportunities of redevelopment downtown.



Participants have fun thinking about how buildings, open space and connections work together to revive Quincy center.

The Mayor's office and the *Quincy Patriot Ledger* organized the charrette with the assistance of elected officials and city departments. In meetings with the Downtown Redevelopment Committee and interviews with key stakeholders, individuals identified important considerations around redevelopment that were addressed during the workshop. These concerns helped to guide the work of over 60 participants who took part in the charrette, held on April 13, 2004, at the Quincy High School. At the full-day event, participants listened to an information session, and participated in small group discussions and a model building exercise.

Groups of participants discussed the following strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities presented by Quincy's downtown. During the event they identified ten challenges and ten strategies

to guide revitalization. Concepts from the five group models built by participants at the charrette were the basis of the concept plans for the Hancock Lot.



Ideas are recorded during small group discussions.

Downtown Challenges

1. Inadequate activity in downtown

The existing shops have conventional business hours (i.e., 9:00 am-5:00 pm) and are predominantly retail. Insufficient office, housing, retail and other uses exist in Quincy Center.



A jumble of activities dominated by cars and loading is one edge of the Hancock Lot.

2. Lack of business investment

Many storefronts are deteriorating or reflect minimal private investment despite the landscaping, sidewalks and lighting along Hancock Street.

3. Not a 24-hour district

Housing exists predominantly in outlying neighborhoods. If located downtown, housing would support retail and put people on the street in the early morning and the evening.

4. Lack of vibrant public space

Downtown has no public gathering space to attract people to use and enjoy Quincy Center.



Single-story shops in the downtown are in need of repair and reinvestment.

5. Inconvenient and unattractive connections to transit

Without continued improvements in the pedestrian environment and alternatives to cars, such as improved connections to transit, bicycle infrastructure, and car-sharing, it will be difficult to create a vibrant downtown.



New housing could support retail and create attractive buildings increasing activity downtown.



able to take advantage of the proximity of services and transit, making the center livelier and more attractive.

6. Poorly located and inaccessible parking

Concerns about the difficulty of driving and parking continue to be a barrier to visiting and enjoying the downtown.

7. Unattractive streetscapes

Auto-dominated landscapes make it difficult for pedestrians to cross major streets and to sit outdoors protected from traffic, reducing downtown activity.

8. Need for recreational resources

The current downtown open space tends to be designed for passive enjoyment; there are no play spaces for children.

9. Regulatory barriers to appropriate development

Zoning and other regulations do not support mixed-use development or the heights and density that will provide high-quality amenities.

10. Pre-existing problems with Town Brook

Ignoring identified flooding and ecological health issues has created political barriers to new development and with little support for alternative development practices that could address these issues.

Downtown Strategies

1. Build on historic and other assets to reinvigorate downtown

Downtown Quincy already contains very strong historic, architectural, cultural, transportation and service resources. Development should increase the downtown's vitality and role as the heart of the community.

2. Encourage a mixed-use district

Housing and commercial uses should be encouraged in the downtown to realize the many benefits of a mixed-use district and "smart growth." Downtown residents will create a constituency that is invested in the downtown's success, and people living downtown will be

3. Create active streets, signature parks and expanded retail opportunities

Participants noted that parks and a vibrant public realm are essential to a successful downtown. Town Brook is seen as an opportunity to develop a signature urban space that could include greenery and water. Landscaped streets and urban plazas are also seen as necessary community infrastructure that should be paired with new development. Active streets and new social spaces will expand retail opportunity as diverse people are attracted downtown.



New development should extend the landscaped sidewalks and quality streetscapes that exists in parts of downtown.



Active places that attract people are and essential to a successful downtown.

4. Organize more special events

Participants felt that holding events downtown—including parades, sidewalk sales, seasonal festivities, markets, public art displays, historical events and educational seminars—will encourage Quincy residents to visit. This programming, in addition to redevelopment, will help build the downtown's reputation as an exciting destination.

5. Encourage transit ridership and strengthen pedestrian connections



Sitting spaces associated with retail create recognizable elements and create an identity for the area.



Walkable streets and pedestrian scale detail is important along with a mix of uses to maintain a vibrant retail street and neighborhood.

Providing alternative modes of transportation, such as a car-sharing service, and coordinating public transportation scheduling to allow for easy transfers will reduce the number of automobiles in downtown while maintaining the number of visitors. Strengthening the pedestrian network by adding through streets, improving the pedestrian environment with benches or granite pavers, and giving priority to pedestrian safety would create a pleasant walking experience.

6. Resolve parking & traffic issues

Analyze parking needs to make sure uses such as the courthouse and businesses, have an adequate supply and the city does not have

to support (and pay for) the cost of over capacity. Participants suggested identifying locations, such as the Ross Garage or above the depressed MBTA tracks, that could support increased parking capacity without compromising the downtown fabric.

7. Work with businesses to make physical improvements

Participants noted that by improving the quality of some storefronts, Quincy could improve perceptions of the downtown and set the stage for attracting new investment giving the downtown an improved public face.

8. Support new venues to draw people to the downtown

A destination use that builds on downtown's unique character, such as a visitor's center, theater or event space, could bring people downtown on a more regular basis and play a central role in the

reinvestment of Quincy's center. Any new community resource should increase the value of existing downtown uses by working with them to make the center a high quality 24-hour district.

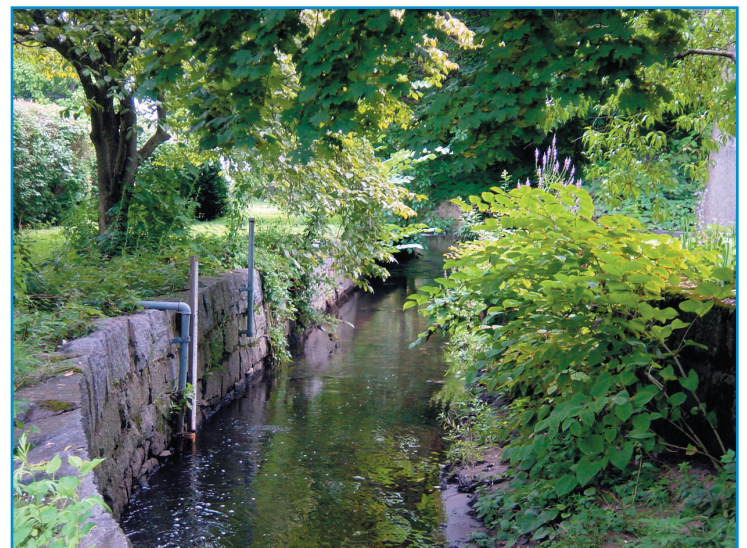
9. Address environmental issues

Coordinate a resolution of environmental issues while providing new opportunities for investing and enjoying downtown. Community members noted that redeveloping the Hancock Lot's 5-acre asphalt surface could create more pleasing places and provide space for downtown uses, but that addressing the health of Town Brook and downstream flooding must be part of improving the district.

10. Create new zoning to support implementation of the community vision

Participants urged continued support for the community vision to revitalize downtown. Civic groups can assist by working with existing business owners, attracting new enterprises, and bolstering social services

and civic events. The city can facilitate private investment by creating an enduring partnership that will work to streamline permitting, assist with financing, provide incentives, and require high-quality development.



The Town Brook (lower) can be used to create a unique urban space, such as this park (upper) with a daylight stream and pool designed to clean stormwater in Charlottesville, VA.

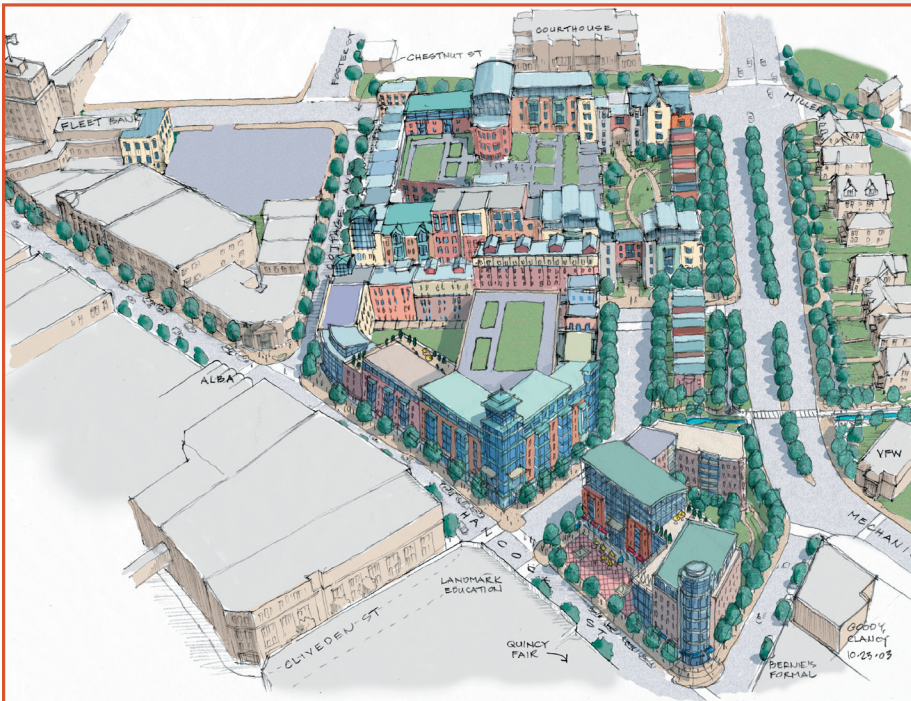
The concept drawings below were developed from the community principles identified during group discussions and ideas represented in the model building exercise. The following images represent two potential redevelopment plans for the Hancock Lot #1 illus-

trates a commercial program and #2 illustrates a residential program. These images represent an important starting point to move forward with the first phases of revitalization and reinvestment in downtown.



HANCOCK LOT #1

View along Hancock Street looking towards the landmark Granite Trust building, showing four story mixed-use buildings along Hancock Street and a commercial office tower.



HANCOCK LOT #2

View of the Hancock Lot from above Hancock Street looking towards the Quincy District Courthouse, showing new apartments, structured parking and townhouses.



CONTACT INFO

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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MODEL BUILDING: Community Ideas for Redeveloping The Hancock Lot

During the charrette, community members created models that explored massing, density and public space for development on the Hancock Lot and adjacent parcels. The models helped participants

explore ways to arrange program elements on the site and understand the physical potential of the Hancock Lot.



MODEL 1

Working Group and Public Reaction

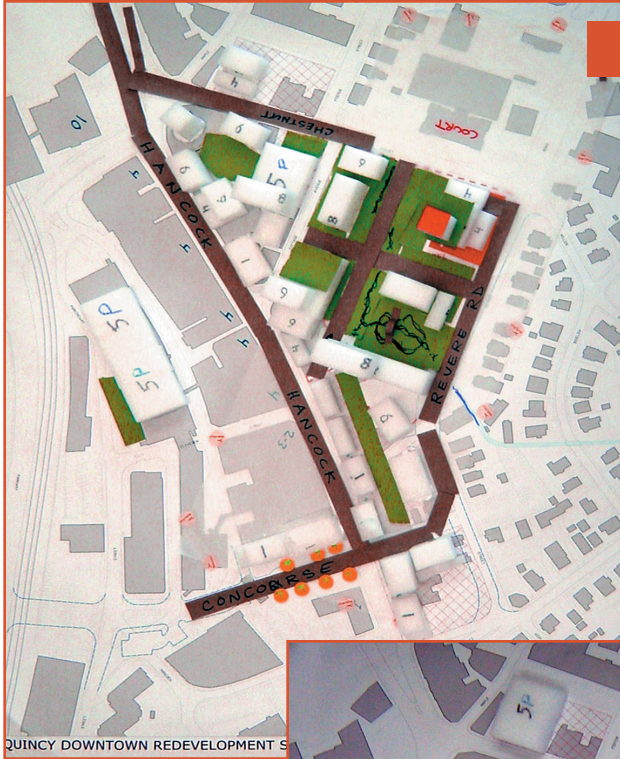
- Endorsed idea of new development along Chestnut Street and Revere Road
- Identified another important node for development: the intersection of Hancock Street and Revere Road
- Created an internal street to organize uses around and improve access through the site
- Located structured parking in the center of the site as well as at the intersection of Revere and Hancock (with apartments shielding parking views along main thoroughfares)
- Identified areas for housing above shops on Hancock, along Revere and Chestnut Street
- Proposed retail uses in areas of high visibility—corner of Mechanic and Revere Road, along Hancock, Chestnut, and new internal street, and near public park
- Liked the idea of new green space accessible to downtown residents and of providing green connectors



MODEL 2

Working Group and Public Reaction

- Arranged new development around central public space and reaffirmed the importance of Hancock Street by placing new development on underutilized parcels on the south
- Placed priority on establishing connections that link Revere Road, downtown, and the site with streets, civic areas, green corridors, and Town Brook
- Provided structured parking off-site on the Ross Garage
- Grouped residential uses around a civic use on the Hancock Lot and to the south of Revere Road
- Maintained strong civic feel for Hancock Street
- Provided green space as community focal point



MODEL 3

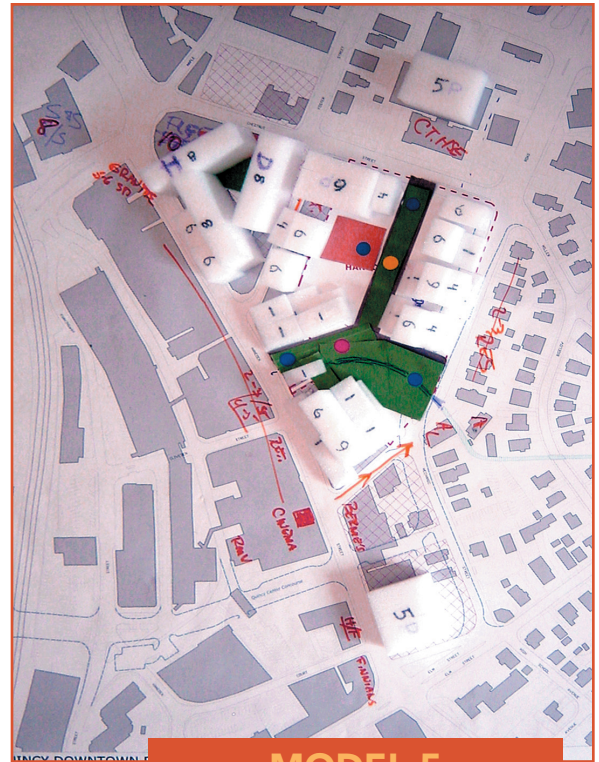
Working Group and Public Reaction

- Added development along Cottage and Hancock streets and a landmark building at the intersection of Chestnut and Revere
- Increased the amount of development on the Fleet Bank block
- Reinforced the major roads surrounding the site and added two new roads breaking down the scale of the site and creating primary connections through it
- Provided structured parking off-site on the Ross Garage and on the Fleet Bank block
- Created civic areas at the top and around the bottom floor of the landmark building
- Provided green space with water and created green connectors along roads in the site and the back of properties along Hancock Street
- Included green space on the roofs of multiple buildings

MODEL 4

Working Group and Public Reaction

- Located new development in the center of the Hancock Lot and around the intersection of Hancock Street and Revere Road
- Lined Revere with additional development at the same scale as neighboring residential buildings
- Created a major and several minor new connections across Hancock Street as well as a green corridor associated with Town Brook
- Located parking on the Ross Garage and the lot behind the Fire Insurance Building
- Developed a civic node at the intersection of Hancock Street and the new connection to the Hancock Lot



MODEL 5

Working Group and Public Reaction

- Placed new development along Revere Road, at the intersection of Revere and Hancock Street, and along the back of Cottage Street
- Increased the amount of development on the Fleet Bank block
- Used a green corridor to break the site into three smaller blocks
- Placed the parking on the corner of Cottage and Chestnut streets or behind the courthouse
- Included a civic space in the interior of the site and along the green corridor as well as a green space with water